

City Council Commercial Center Improvement Committee

February 23, 2004

5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

2nd Floor Work Session Room 2A

Hayward City Hall

777 'B' Street

Hayward, CA 94541

AGENDA

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

PUBLIC COMMENTS *(The Committee welcomes your comments at this point for items not on the agenda. If you have a comment about an item listed here, the Committee requests that your comments be made when that item is discussed.)*

AGENDA ITEMS

Action

1. Proposed Retail Development – Jim Towslee for PacLand/Batavia Holdings (Applicant) – Retail center to include a 34,000 square-foot Circuit City Store and 11,100 square feet of convenience and specialty retail shops – 2840 Whipple Road adjacent to the Northbound I-880 off-ramp and opposite the Target Store Review and Comment

ADJOURNMENT

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cc: Mayor Cooper
City Manager
Assistant City Manager
Deanna Bogue
Public Works Director

City Clerk
Planning Manager
CED Administrator
Daily Review
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Council Member Rodriquez
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CITY OF HAYWARD
STAFF REPORT

AGENDA DATE 2/23/04

AGENDA ITEM _____

TO: City Council Commercial Center Improvement Committee

FROM: Director of Community and Economic Development

SUBJECT: Proposed Retail Development – Jim Towslee for PacLand/Batavia Holdings (Applicant) – Retail center to include a 34,000 square-foot Circuit City Store and 11,100 square feet of convenience and specialty retail shops

The project is located at 2480 Whipple Road adjacent to the Northbound I-880 off-ramp and opposite the Target Store

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Committee review the project plans and provide comments to the applicant and staff.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed development is located within the Industrial (I) District at the southern gateway to Hayward. The Zoning Ordinance specifically recognizes this site as a prime location for regional or sub-regional retailers due to its location at the junction of two arterial roadways, freeway access and high visibility. Commercial retail development of this nature is allowed in the I District on minimum 4-acre parcels visible from the freeway with the Planning Commission's approval of a Conditional Use Permit. Crescent Truck terminal occupies the 5-acre site.

The applicant proposes to remove the truck terminal and house a Circuit City retail store in a 34,000-square-foot building. However, no tenants have been secured yet for the convenience and specialty retail shop spaces.

Site Plan

The Circuit City store is proposed at the rear of the site with the storefront facing the main parking lot and Whipple Road. Its loading area, at the rear of the building, would face I-880 but would be shielded from view by the CalTrans soundwall protecting the Central Park West Mobilehome Park to the south in Union City. The "Shops A" building of 5,100 square feet would be in-line with the Circuit City store. The freestanding "Shops B" building of 6,000 square feet would be located at the entry to the property at Whipple Road. The proposal provides adequate parking based on City regulations. Shurgard Storage is located easterly of the

site and a gas station occupies the majority of the Whipple Road frontage in front of the proposed project.

All access is provided to the site from Whipple Road. The primary entry would be opposite the Target entry and the applicant would be responsible for installing a traffic signal to control access for both Circuit City and Target; the proper alignment of this intersection would require acquisition of a portion of the adjacent Shurgard property. A secondary access would be limited to right-in/right-out movements so not to interfere with traffic movements on Whipple Road. Future access would be planned to connect to the gas station site should that property be redeveloped.

Architecture and Landscaping

The buildings are designed in a classical architectural theme, similar to the Target building to the north, which complements surrounding industrial and retail uses alike. Split-face concrete block, painted dark tan, is proposed for the base of the building. A stucco surface is proposed for the upper portions; the wall color would change from white to ivory to light tan on various sections of the buildings. A dark-tan-colored molded cornice would provide a cap for the buildings. A rectangular panel, extending above the cornice line of the Circuit City store, would be located over the main entry, as well as at two other locations on the westerly and southerly elevations to provide emphasis toward I-880. The storefronts are covered by metal awnings painted turquoise.

The buildings display a strong horizontal emphasis. Staff recommends that architectural interest be added to emphasize storefronts and to break up longer wall masses. This could be in the form of pilasters or other vertical elements, which would establish a rhythm and break up the long horizontal building lines. This is especially important along the southerly and easterly elevations facing I-880 and the Shurgard property where the building displays the longest uninterrupted wall sections. In addition, a combination of vertical-growth landscaping and vine-covered trellises could be provided along all elevations to soften the visual impact of the building mass. Similar landscape treatments may be seen along the freeway-side of Wal-Mart on the westerly side of 880 and on The Home Depot and Target stores to the north of the project. The metal awnings are proposed as simple flat panels but should display greater detail with possibly the addition of valances and end panels.

Staff also recommends that the continuity between the Circuit City store and the "Shops A" building be enhanced to provide a visual connection for shoppers. The shops building appears visually disconnected from the Circuit City store and there is no architectural element that would guide shoppers between the two. A trellis, in conjunction with the other recommended landscape and sculptural elements, would be one way to facilitate this connection. Landscape and/or sculptural elements would also help to enhance the pedestrian scale along the front of the building. The decorative trim between the block base and the stuccoed upper walls should also be more pronounced to provide more interest at the pedestrian level. The pedestrian walkway between the Circuit City store and the "Shops B" building at Whipple Road would also benefit from the addition of a trellis or other features to accentuate the connection.

The rectangular panel over the entry of the Circuit City store (and elsewhere as described earlier), while a signature of its new stores, is not consistent in form with the architectural style of the building. The panels would abruptly break the cornice line of the building and they would contain no matching detailing. Staff recommends that, if the blocks are to remain, that the vertical elements, discussed earlier, and other building details be incorporated to soften their appearance. The gold color of the panel would be better integrated into the color scheme by replacing the white color with another that bridges the spectrum between the tans and ivory and the gold. The Circuit City storefront is massive and the entry doors appear to be offset to one side; the storefront would benefit from the addition of architectural features at the pedestrian level that provide a visual cue of entry for the shopper.

The three panels would be used each to house a circular Circuit City can sign. The store is allowed two wall signs, one for each frontage on Whipple Road and I-880. The southerly and westerly elevations of the Circuit City store both face I-880 and the sign on one of these elevations is redundant, requiring the elimination of one of the wall signs. The store is also allowed one free-standing freeway-oriented sign and Circuit City is proposing to install one at the freeway. Furthermore, the large retailers in Hayward have all used individual letters to make up their wall signs. Staff recommends that this precedent be maintained. Architectural elements could be used to provide a circular feature onto which the store's signature font could be mounted. As an alternative, the background portion of the can sign could be opaque so that light shines only through the letters. The signs for the smaller tenants should be located in well-defined areas rather than having to cross reveal lines.

CONCLUSION:

PacLand's proposal for a regional-based retail center is consistent with the City's goals and policies for development on this site and provides an anchor at Hayward's southern gateway. The architecture and building materials are consistent with the design theme set by the Target store. Committee comments provided at this meeting, together with the staff recommendations in the staff report, would aid in the preparation of this project for consideration by the Planning Commission.

Prepared by:

Richard E. Patenaude, AICP
Principal Planner

Recommended by:

Sylvia Ehrental
Director of Community and Economic Development

Approved by:

Jesús Armas, City Manager

Attachments: Plans and Elevations